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Belarus: the inhumane treatment and hospitalisation of prominent opposition leader Viktar Babaryka

European Parliament resolution of 11 May 2023 on Belarus: the inhumane treatment and hospitalisation of prominent opposition leader Viktar Babaryka (2023/2693(RSP))

(C/2023/1069)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its previous resolutions on Belarus,

— having regard to Rules 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas in July 2021, former presidential candidate Viktar Babaryka was sentenced to 14 years in prison on politically motivated charges;

B. whereas Babaryka was hospitalised with traces of beatings and required surgery; whereas his lawyers and family are being denied requests for information or contact with him;

C. whereas prominent Belarusian political prisoners, including opposition leaders Maryia Kalesnikava, Maksim Znak, Siarhei Tsikhanouski, Pavel Seviarynets and Mikalai Statkevich, have been subjected to complete isolation, with a total lack of information about them; whereas the imprisonment of Andrzej Poczobut, a Polish minority leader in Belarus, is an example of the persecution of national minorities in Belarus;

D. whereas in its report of 3 February 2023, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that detention conditions in Belarus amounted to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, and torture; whereas prisoners do not receive timely medical assistance or legal counsel; whereas there are 1 500 political prisoners in Belarus and Aliaksandr Vikhor, Dzianis Kuzniatsou, Vitold Ashurak and Mikalai Klimovich died in detention;

1. Urges the Belarusian authorities to immediately cease the mistreatment of Viktar Babaryka and other political prisoners, and to ensure proper medical assistance and access to lawyers, family, diplomats and international organisations so that they can assess their condition and provide aid;

2. Calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Viktar Babaryka and his son Eduard, alongside Mariya Kalesnikava, Maksim Znak, Siarhei Tsikhanouski, Pavel Seviarynets, Mikalai Statkevich, Raman Pratasevich, Andrzej Poczobut, Ales Bialiatski and all other political prisoners in Belarus;

3. Strongly condemns the inhumane treatment of political prisoners and their families, and the continued repression of political opposition, civil society, trade unions, legal defenders, independent media and national minorities in Belarus;

4. Reiterates its solidarity with the people of Belarus in their struggle for a free, sovereign and democratic Belarus; condemns Belarus's involvement in the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine;

5. Calls for the EU and the Member States to develop a targeted EU assistance programme to help victims of political repression, including by improving asylum procedures and providing temporary shelter in the EU for those seeking political refuge;

6. Reiterates its call for the EU and the Member States to expand and ensure the proper enforcement of EU sanctions against individuals and entities responsible for the repression in Belarus, including judges, prosecutors, law enforcement, prison and penal colony officials, and regime enablers; calls for sanctions against those responsible for the illegal deportation of Ukrainian children to Belarus;

7. Reiterates its demand to establish accountability for all perpetrators of the systematic human rights violations under the Lukashenka regime;

8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Member States, the representatives of the Belarusian democratic forces and the de facto Belarusian authorities.